

THE NEW SAHARA

Abandoned by Tutors Left Their Troops Go Mad.

With the British Armies in the Field, March 9.—(By Mail).—With Tomlinson, of the London "News and Leader," Bean, of the combined Australian papers and "Artze," staff colonel, I have just explored the new Sahara, that hideous country abandoned by the Germans lest their troops go mad.

The British gave it the name Sahara. Crown Prince Rupprecht's men called it by another—the "graveyard." But I should give it another still—the field of a thousand shudders—the place where nightmares are made.

Take your map of France and find Bapume. To the west and south of that place lies the new Sahara. If your map is a large one you will find it covered with the names of hamlets, villages and towns, but today all these are gone. No trace of them is left and as one stands in the middle of this blighted country, no sprig of grass, no sign of a tree, no weed, flower or shrub greets the vision as far as the eyes can see. There is only a greenish black soil, freshly churned up and battered by shells ranging in depth from five to 60 or more feet.

Of course, one cannot ride through this country. Nor for that matter can one walk. One can only slip and slide and stagger along, even in danger of falling into funnel shaped quagmires from which escape is impossible without aid. I know of two correspondents who came near losing their lives in just such places, more perilous far than the dreaded quicksands. Horses and mules, on account of their weight and the difficulty in helping them once in the coils of the ooze, usually are drawn down to their death.

"Look out for the bayonet!" is a common cry of warning as you stumble through the mud and hundreds and thousands of rifles are buried providing the walls were firm enough; if not, his body was thrown, outside. The bodies of soldiers who fell in this sector during November are only now being buried and by the English—the Germans were unable to get at them.

In the pitch black darkness, many a soldier fell in the awful funnel shaped death traps in the mud to be left to suffocate in the terrible mixture probably already holding bodies of previous victims. By day, while shells fell on and about them, killing the living and disintering the already buried, dead faces stared at the Kaiser's men from every side and at night crisp hands, sticking out of the mud tripped and threw those who had to venture into the open. Iron nerved troops felt creepy. They were afraid to be left alone in the dark. Showers of flares were sent into the air to shed light on and about the trench, but these only served to throw a horrible glare over the unburied dead. Faces twitched, nerves failed, and prisoners say some soldiers went mad.

This new Sahara is the wonder of artillery. One wonders while standing by a clean warm muzzled gun as it blazes away what is happening at the other end of the shell's trajectories. I have seen immediately the Germans went out I went in and the product of the intensive gunnery, the drumfire of artillery which I had seen and heard throughout weeks lay before me—the new Sahara. And in the middle of this hellawful desert was the field of a thousand shudders, nightmareland, the ultimate horror place in war. People asked why the Germans retired. Do you wonder why they left? Here you have an inkling—but only an inkling—of what the British guns are doing—making new Sahara's along the German front reason, and to the noisome smell of miles of muck is added an unmistakable stench. Intuition would tell you the cause of it even were not the bodies lying about plentiful to be seen. They lie singly, in all kinds of attitudes, or in groups, or piles. They are on mounds or at the bottom of shell holes, in fragments or so entire as to resemble merely very tired and muddy soldiers gone to sleep regardless of time of place.

Here ran the German lines during December and January following the losing the battle of the Somme. There were no communicating trenches leading back, the British smashed them as they dug—and to get into our foremost positions the soldiers had to traverse the open ground at night. Food and ammunition had to be brought up in the same way and as shells never ceased falling in this area and every now and then the darkness was swept by machine guns, those holding the line often went hungry and spent weary days and nights, waiting for relief parties which never came.

When a German fell in the open, he lay where he fell. When he fell in the trenches, he was buried in the side of the trench—in the ground and frequently only the thrusting blades of their bayonets are sticking out. The great waste of war is everywhere evident. Wrought and twisted rifle barrels, splintered stocks, cartridge clips. Full of cartridges in uncountable number, unexploded shells of all calibres, hand grenades of every size and shape, trench and mortar bombs, aerial torpedoes, brass shell cases, abandoned stores of live shells, knapsacks, cartridge belts, articles of clothing, steel helmets, fatigue caps and what not, litter the surface of the new Sahara and one can only imagine the amazing quantity of stuff which must lie beneath it.

You might think the view from here depressing, and it is, for it was while fighting along here that the Germans gave the name of "the graveyard." But the field of a thousand shudders lies further on. Up towards the bloody butt of Warlencourt, Ligny-Thilley and thereabouts, one reaches hell's own acres. The water covering the slime in the crater beds has become gruesomely red, exactly like blood, for some uncaanny.



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NOW, THEREFORE, I, J. Bryan Grimes, Secretary of the State of North Carolina, do hereby certify that the said corporation did, on the 5 day of March 1917 file in my office a duly executed and attested consent in writing to the dissolution of said corporation, executed by all the stockholders thereof, which said consent and the record of the proceedings aforesaid are now on file in my said office as provided by law.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereto set my hand and affixed my official seal at Raleigh, this 5 day of March, A. D. 1917.

J. BRYAN GRIMES,
Secretary of State.
RECORDED IN:
Record of Incorporations, Volume 1,
Page 316, March 7, 1917.
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